

Outdoor use of metaldehyde to be banned to protect wildlife

Press release

Restrictions on the use of metaldehyde



The outdoor use of metaldehyde, a pesticide used to control slugs on farms and in gardens, is set to be banned in Great Britain from the end of March 2022 in order to better protect wildlife and the environment, farming Minister Victoria Prentis announced today.

The decision takes into account advice from the UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) about the risks that metaldehyde poses to birds and mammals.

Metaldehyde will be phased out by 31 March 2022 to give growers and gardeners appropriate time to switch to alternative slug control measures. It will be legal to sell metaldehyde products until 31 March 2021 with use of the products then allowed for a further 12 months until 31 March 2022. Small quantities of product for gardens should not be disposed of at home and can be disposed of through local authority waste facilities.

While slugs can cause significant damage to farmers' crops and gardeners' plants, pesticides containing ferric phosphate can provide effective control without carrying the same risks to wildlife as metaldehyde slug pellets.

Alternative methods of pest control also include cultural techniques like planting slug resistant crop varieties, selectively timing irrigation and harvest and sowing seeds more deeply into the soil.

"The scientific evidence is clear – the risks metaldehyde poses to the environment and to wildlife are too great.

"The government is committed to building back greener from Coronavirus and the restrictions on the use of metaldehyde are another step towards building a cleaner and greener country for the next generation."

Decisions on the use of pesticides are based on careful scientific assessment of the risks in order to ensure they will not harm people or pose unacceptable risks to the environment.

The government is committed to leaving the environment in a better state under the ambitious [25 Year Environment Plan](#) and the forthcoming [Environment Bill](#) will put the environment at the centre of policy making to ensure we have a cleaner, greener and more resilient country for the next generation.

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